



NEWS RELEASE

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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

November 15, 2005

Governor Rell Kicks off OPERATION ELF for Connecticut Troops and Their Families

HARTFORD -- Governor M. Jodi Rell and Connecticut National Guard today announced this year's special effort – *Operation ELF* to help Connecticut servicemembers and their families during the holiday season.

“The holidays are usually a time for festive family get-togethers and celebrations. This year, many military families will spend the holidays worrying about and missing their loved ones who are on active duty,” said Rell. “Many of our CT servicemembers, in turn, are worried about their families back home.

“We’re grateful for the courageous service of our men and women in uniform serving in Iraq and Kuwait. One meaningful way we can say thank you is to make sure that the families that they have left behind are given any help they need,” she said.

Two-hundred Connecticut Army National Guard soldiers are currently deployed in Southwest Asia with more than 1,000 getting ready to deploy after the new year.

This year's *Operation ELF* will primarily be focused on helping family members and the children.

For the families, donations of new, unwrapped toys for all age groups, both sexes, are being sought. Also being solicited are grocery gift cards which may be used to buy holiday dinners and phone cards which may be used to call their deployed loved ones. Donations of fuel oil, Christmas trees, snow removal services and Financial contributions may also be made to the Connecticut National Guard Foundation, Inc.

Many of the toys that are collected will be distributed to deployed families during a special holiday dinner which is scheduled for mid-December. Other toys will be held by families to be placed under trees on Christmas morning.

Grocery gift cards and pre-paid phone cards will be used throughout the holidays and beyond for families in need. Many military families face financial pressures because activated soldiers have seen the elimination or reduction of their civilian job paychecks.

(MORE)

CONNECTICUT ARMY NATIONAL GUARD



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2-2-2

“It will be a difficult holiday season for many Connecticut families. But we can make a heartfelt difference and we can bring the warmth of holiday season to our military families by participating in Operation ELF. Please, help us remember our soldiers and their families. Help us lift spirits and send a message of love, hope and peace for 2005,” said Rell.

Operation E.L.F. was established in 2003 by then Lieutenant Governor M. Jodi Rell as a sincere gesture of support to our military families who were separated during the holiday season due to deployment, and also potentially suffering tremendous financial hardship as a result of their call to active duty. Operation E.L.F. also provided the generous citizens of our great State an opportunity to “do something” to show their support of our men and women in uniform and their families who are also called to serve during mobilization.

In six short weeks, Operation E.L.F. generated thousands of new, unwrapped toys, gift cards for grocery and department stores, seasonal services and nearly \$50,000 in monetary contributions to the Connecticut National Guard Foundation, Inc. As a result, 1,200 military families in Connecticut received holiday gifts and warm wishes at a time when they were lonely, afraid and financially unable to provide for their children as much as they would like to have.

“Our sincere thanks to Governor Rell and the generous people of Connecticut for making Operation E.L.F. an overwhelming success over the past two years,” said Maj. Gen. Thaddeus J. Martin, Adjutant General and Commander of the Connecticut National Guard.

Through Operation ELF there are other programs to help out a Connecticut servicemember. New, unwrapped toys for newborns through eighteen year-old young adults are needed. Toys may be dropped off at following armories **beginning Monday, November 28, 2005 through Wednesday, December 14, 2005 between the hours of 8:00 a.m. and 4:30 p.m. -**

Army Aviation Support Facility

Bradley International Airport
Route 75
Windsor Locks, CT 06096

103rd Air Control Squadron

206 Boston Post Road
Orange, CT 06477

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3-3-3

New London Armory

249 Bayonet Street

New London, CT 06320

Norwich Armory

38 Stott Avenue

Norwich, CT 06360

Putnam Armory

15 Keech Street

Putnam, CT 06260

Stratford Armory

63 Armory Road

Stratford, CT 06614

State Armory Hartford

360 Broad Street

Hartford, CT 06105

Waterbury Armory

64 Field Street

Waterbury, CT 06702

Beginning Monday, December 12, 2005 through December 16, 2005 the Hartford Armory will be open until 6:00p.m.

You can support a soldier by supporting their family with the donation of a gift card to a local grocery or department store, gas station or pharmacy. These cards can be given to families so that they can choose what they need most. Cards of any denomination are most welcomed and appreciated.

Gift cards may be delivered to any one of our drop-off locations or, if you prefer, they can be mailed to:

Connecticut National Guard
Office of Family Programs
360 Broad Street
Hartford, CT 06105-3795

If mailing a donation, please be sure to include your name, address and phone number so that we can send an appropriate acknowledgement of your contribution.

Another is the Adopt-A-Family program to assist those families who are suffering an extreme financial hardship as a result of their service member's call to Active Duty. Individuals or businesses may "adopt" a family from this category and help them have a great holiday season. The name of the family is never revealed to the adopting person or organization. Rather, a summary of the family's demographics and wish list are provided. Gifts are delivered by that family's case worker along with any the name of the donor, if so desired.

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4-4-4

You can volunteer some of your time and expertise to the Handyperson Hotline Center. Contact Sgt. Maj. Toby Cormier at (860) 209-0770 for further information.

The Connecticut National Guard Foundation, Inc. is a non-profit, 501(c)(3) organization that was established in April of 2003 for the purpose of providing emergency financial assistance for Connecticut National Guard members and their families. All donations are fully tax-deductible.

Donations to the foundation can be sent to:
Connecticut National Guard Foundation, Inc.
360 Broad Street, Box 53
Hartford, CT 06105-3795
Website: www.ctngfoundation.org

-30-
